

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

There is provided an exhaust emission control apparatus for an internal combustion engine which can reduce the emission of toxic substances and quickly activate a catalyst. An exhaust flow control means suppresses the flow of exhaust in an exhaust system when the engine is started. An operative state detecting means detects whether or not the period of time elapsed after a vehicle starts accelerating from standstill is equal to or shorter than a predetermined period of time. While the operative state detecting means detects that the period of time elapsed after the vehicle starts accelerating from standstill is equal to or shorter than the predetermined period of time, an exhaust flow control limiting means stops or reduces the suppression of exhaust flow by the exhaust flow control device.